

Danette Onofrio
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March 5, 2021

Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the ability to give testimony on HB-6355. My name is Danette Onofrio, and I am a supporter of initiatives of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I am a professional trainer for addictions and mental health providers and am a member of a family impacted by gun violence. My father died in workplace violence. His killer was a man diagnosed with Schizophrenia who was in a paranoid episode, who was first found dangerous a year before hospitalized. Had HB-6355 been passed years ago, my father's killer would not have been able to walk into a store to purchase a gun to murder him.

Most people with a mental illness are not dangerous or violent and deserve the right to bear arms. But there are some people in our society who do have a serious mental illness and are dangerous to themselves or others. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the Second Amendment rights are unlimited. States have the right to pass laws restricting guns to some residents under certain conditions.

I applaud the state for passing a law to restrict guns from dangerous folks. But the law needs to be tightened. We should not, as notable in my father's case, assume that a person is not still dangerous a year later. While for most, a year's time makes a significant difference in safety, but only a trained professional who makes an assessment can determine whether there is a continued risk so that gun rights can be restored and have the right to purchase firearms.

I strongly urge the passage of HB-6355 and that it ensures two paths of initiation: the courts or police departments. This protects that the individual is no longer a threat to himself and others and ensures that the potential victims preserve their constitutional right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Danette Onofrio